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ROUND FLAMBOROUGH HEAD.

'LINE-OF-BATTLE-SHIP, ahoy!'

The lusty hail rouses the skipper of the *Volsung* as he is reclining lazily in the well of the canoe, with his legs dangling picturesquely overboard, and his half-closed eyes dreamily watching the throat of the mainsail, from whose peak the burgee of the Royal Canoe Club flutters bravely; and meditates, as he listens to the music of the waters, upon the utter freedom and perfect gladness of a canoeist's life.

A coble is running free across our bows before a westerling breeze, and the man at the tiller, with a broad grin on his jolly bronzed face, is nodding a cheery greeting. 'Morning, Bob. How much longer will the tide run?'

'An hour an' more yet, sir.—You'll make the Head easy!'

And on the *Trixie* rushes through the water, her white sides gleaming in the sun as she heads for the distant harbour of Bridlington, whilst the *Volsung* is steered for a speck out seawards which is bobbing on the waves.

'North Smithie buoy,' reports the pilot as we draw abreast the great red-and-white ringed cylinder, round which the tide is running like a millrace, as though it would tear it from its moorings twenty-seven feet below.

'Keep her away a couple of points,' is the order.

The rudder moves gently; the sheet is slacked off, and the little craft slips merrily onward towards the cliffs of Flamborough.

The muffled moan of the surf on shore away on the port beam grows louder, and our lookout-man catches now and again a long line of white where the rollers are breaking on the rocks. A toss, a plunge, and splash comes a burst of foaming water over the bows along the deck, and we are in a reach of broken waves; for there is an 'overfall' here—foul ground below, over which the currents eddy and swirl, especially at tide-turn, however calm a day it be. But the skipper has been through this before, and so

goes straight at the crested surges steadily; and soon we are rocking on smoother waters, where the long swell comes rolling in from the open sea, and can look about at the glorious scene around. How grand the Head looks, towering straight out of ocean, as though it knows what an important point it is upon the seaman's chart, and how he shapes his course by its wave-worn front. A little back from the cliff-line stands the white tower of the lighthouse, shimmering in the rays of the sun, which, catching the glass walls of the lantern-room, flash them into a huge diamond of dazzling brightness. Flamborough Head light is one of the finest in the world, a revolving one, which shines once every half-minute, and can be seen twenty-one miles away.

Two whites to one red
Indicates Flambro' Head,

says the North Sea pilot-book, meaning that it shows two white lights in succession and then a red. It is a dioptric light, having one powerful lamp, round which a circular frame of six faces, composed of great glass prisms, revolves by clock-work; the third and sixth faces having sheets of ruby glass before them to give the red effect to the light. The cost of the lantern only was seven thousand pounds. When the sun has sunk behind the Yorkshire wolds, its work begins; the lamp is lighted, and the clockwork wound. Then the watch pacing steamer's deck, Jack Collier taking his 'trick at the wheel,' and the bluff yawlsman riding to his nets far out at sea, will see a tiny point of light grow and grow, until a brilliant beam of brightness flashes across the darkness, and then dies down again and leaves all black awhile. Then a ruby glimmer begins to show, and flashes into a star, which throws a crimson glare upon the waves.

To the right is the 'old lighthouse,' a tower of ancient date, surmounted by a flagstaff, from which a red-and-white striped pennant is flying. Long years ago, tradition says, it was used to burn a beacon, to warn the mariner from the dangerous coast; now, it is a signal-station, so

that the passing ship can send word of her whereabouts to her owners, at the other side of the Atlantic perhaps. To the left, at the edge of the point, is a battery, where, during fogs, a rocket is thrown up every ten minutes, which bursts high up with a loud report; whilst beneath is the opening to a long dark cavern, where the waters gurgle sullenly and lap the rocky walls in blackness invisible. Around us, the wavelets dance joyously in the sunlight, with 'Flamborough divers' and sea-parrots darting into them and out again; whilst steamers are screwing their way along, bound north, smoking bravely, and spouting the water from the engine-room ports, and 'Geordies' (or colliers), dirty schooners, and lumbering brigs, with now and then a smarter brigantine or trim barque, are working their way before the steady land-breeze. Farther out, a splendid four-masted ship, her snowy canvas drawing every stitch—with stunsails aloft and aloft—is gliding majestically southward, piling up a heap of sparkling water under her bows, which foams under her counter and streams away in a broad hissing track behind.

But whilst we have been watching the passing ships, the wind and tide have borne us onward, and we just get a glimpse of Silex Bay, where the sandy beach gives a landing for the coast-guards living in that group of white cottages up there, and whose entrance is guarded by 'Adam and Eve'—two rocks which stand out on either hand; then huge cliffs shut it in, and we sail under a grim wall of chalk towering two hundred feet above us into the sky.

Kittiwakes and gulls sun themselves in the ledges, and the shrill note of the curlew echoes from the land; whilst the warm sun is over all, bathing the glaring cliffs and shining upon green waters, until, far down, can be seen the long seaweeds waving over the sunken rocks, a very picture of peace and quiet. But a terrible place is this when the wild gale is lashing the North Sea into fury, and sending huge seas thundering against these cliffs, and whirling the foam-scud up into the black sky, and driving it far inland in big flakes. Then the ill-fated vessel caught by those breakers is lost, and the harsh scream of the seabird and shrieking storm-blast are the requiem of the doomed crew aboard. The breeze has died away inshore here, so we will get the canvas stowed snugly out of the way.

'Stand by! Ready! Hoist away! Belay!' The tiny blocks squeak musically; there is a flutter of white canvas, and then the sprit-main-sail is brailed up close against the mast.

'Out paddle! Easy ahead.'

Now a picturesque little bay breaks the cliff-line with two curious pillar-rocks, rising up some distance from the land amongst the waves, known as the 'King and Queen.' The King has a wide archway piercing his royal person, through which the *Volsung* darts; and then, as she slips round

the Queen out into the open sea again, her majesty certainly bears a striking resemblance to a lady in all the glory of a modern 'dress-improver.'

All along the coast are openings in the rocks to tiny cavelets; and many a grim tale can the fisher-folk tell how, after fierce gales when gallant ships have disappeared, they have found crushed mangled bodies jammed in those clefts, or lying tangled in the 'oarweed' of the rocks below; and they will point out a cave some forty feet above high-water mark where once a desperate sailor, who had seen his mates sucked down by the greedy breakers, climbed, and was found all gashed and bruised long after by seagull-hunting fisher-lads.

Ten minutes' run brings us to one of the glories of Flamborough, the great 'Five-arch Cave.' A lofty pointed archway leads in from the sea; and paddling steadily under it, we are in a huge vaulted chamber, whose groined roof springs from one massive central column of ragged chalk, and whose floor is far down under the translucent emerald water, sixteen feet below. Two passages lead inward, and in the gloom the water sobs in unseen hollows as the *Volsung* cautiously works her way along the larger of the two, until a fear seizes the skipper lest, in the darkness, the tide, which has begun to flow, may lift the tiny craft on to some point of rock, and then surging back, cause her to heel over and roll the crew out into the black deep water; so he shouts the order, 'Go astern;' and she shoots out through the most northerly opening into the bright sunlight again.

Close by is 'Robin Lythe's Hole,' a spacious cavern, named after a famed smuggler, and having a roomy entrance from seawards, with a smaller leading to the right out into a bay round a point. At low water, this cave may be explored on foot from the upper end; but care must be taken not to be caught by the tide, for it fills at high water. Rounding the point, we get a fine view of the 'North Sea Landing,' a little cove bounded on either hand by bluff cliffs, and having a strip of sand and shingle for a beach, and then a steep slope leading up inland to the village. On this incline are drawn up long lines of gaily painted boats, the famed cobbles which brave the rough North Sea.

The lifeboat house stands half-way up the cliff, doors open, showing the *Gertrude* on its 'skids' within; and under the lee of it, basking in the warm sunshine, are three or four old men, clad in reddish canvas trousers, blue guernseys, and battered sou'-westers; whilst not far off, half-a-dozen sturdy women in short blue serge petticoats and linen bonnets are at work on the boats, singing blithely a simple hymn-tune; one and another looking up now and again to cast an eye down to the beach, where a group of bare-legged youngsters are playing at the water's edge,

and helping a bronzed fellow to launch a coble, in which he and his boy in the bows are going to take a party to see the caves. These are fisher-folk of Flamborough—or 'Little Denmark,' as it has been named—members of a community exclusive yet in all its ways; they are still a colony to themselves, direct descendants of the old vikings who landed here when 'Ida the Flameman' came to conquer wild Northumbria long centuries ago. They speak of all outsiders as 'foreigners' to this day, and marry religiously amongst themselves. Tyburnia and Mayfair are not more exclusive than Flamborough town! There are no more daring or skilful boatmen to be found anywhere than real Flamborough men—big muscular fellows, with clear blue eyes and fair golden hair and beards. Sons following their fathers unquestioningly, take to the sea and the hard calling of a fisherman's life; whilst the daughters learn from their mothers to knit the warm blue guernseys, and gather and prepare the shellfish for bait. The hazel-eyed girl listens to the fisher-lad's bluff wooing; and when he has part share in the coble he helps to man, marries him, and shares his lot, paints his boat, mends his nets, and bravely helps him all she can. Many a night she will lie awake to listen to the hoarse howling gale sweeping up from the sea, and pray for a precious boat tossing far out upon the angry waters; and hasten down in early morning to meet the flowing tide, anxious to hear that 'blessedest, best sound, the boats' keels grating on the sand.' Like enough, there is a sad dark day in store for her, when the gallant coble comes in no more, and nought is known, until some wreckage floats ashore, or a dead man lies on the wan wet sands.

There is an old woman, worn and bent now by many a hardship, who will tell a tale as sad as ever told—How one night, years ago, a tempest swept the seas and burst upon the far-off fishing fleet; and in the cold gray dawn, women paced the beach searching with terribly eager eyes amongst the breakers. 'Ah, sir, it was a dowly day for me and mony ither. I got my poor bairn and his father up fra the rocks yan after ither and took 'em right hame ath'ort our donkey's back, the salt water dripping sairly all th' way. My man's face had an all unrestful look; belike he'd thowt o' me, and how I'd greet; but Ned's war all a smile. Ay, Lord! 'twas trouble then.'

They never speak of the lost husband or sweetheart here as drowned, but use an expression pathetically quaint and simple, and say, 'The sea gat him.'

Yet, though loss and sorrow too often are their lot, the Flamborough men are a cheerful, manly race, who do their work fearlessly without foreboding, ready alike to work their nets and lines, help put a crew aboard some disabled vessel, or man the lifeboat.

Crossing the bay, and standing well out to weather a reef of rocks which runs like a submerged pier from the northernmost point, we steer for a narrow lofty cleft in the chalk, where the tide rises and falls some two feet each time the swell rolls in. Watching a favourable chance, the pilot makes a dash between the lifts of the sea, and the canoe

glides into the cool twilight of the 'Kirk Hole.' There is a wonderful echo here; and as our cabin-boy breaks into the chorus, 'Oh, we're three jolly, jolly sailor-boys,' the chords fluttering aloft are caught and flung back by the listening crannies in softer strains, until they die away in the distant hollows of the rocky dome overhead. The water swishing amongst the pebbles at the far end of the cave sounds like a song of coy maidens hiding in the purple seaweed; and as we follow the winding waterway out through another entrance, fancy can almost catch glimpses of laughing eyes peeping round the jagged points and edges, until a burst of sunlight streaming onward from 'Thornwick Bay' drives the enchanting visions of beauteous sea-nymphs back into the dim gloom behind.

A peep into the 'Smuggler's Cave,' whose deep sandy beach was of old often scored by the keels of swift boats as they ran their cargoes of contraband goods here from some saucy lugger in the offing, and whose long dry passage inland was a favourite 'hide' for 'dooty-free swag'—and we head northward again, skirting the bay with its golden patch of sand until we round a jagged spur of rock into 'Little Thornwick Bay.' A lonely awesome cove is this, with more gloomy caverns, and a wild chasm called the 'Devil's Washpot,' up which angry seas dash in fury, and then foam madly out through a well-like opening on to the cliff above, in seething spray. From here the ruggedness of the coast is lost, and 'Speeton Cliffs' show a smooth front of whiteness, which gradually grows darker in colour, until rich brown clay reaches in a great curve to Filey, and its famed Brig showing a line of black upon the water. Away beyond, half lost in purple haze, the old castle of Scarborough looks out from its bold headland over seas, and then the sky and ocean meet in a bond of sober gray.

But the afternoon is wearing on, and the weather is looking dirty to windward, and we ought to be laying a homeward course, or shall lose the best of the tide, which is setting strongly down the coast. Already, raindrops are beginning to plash into the water and hum upon the decks, so don sou'-wester and oilskin, and look alive, pilot!

'Bout ship.'

A dreary drizzle is wrapping the land and blurring the gliding panorama of cliff and caves as we paddle southward, on past the North Landing and the mist-shrouded 'King and Queen.' The wind is freshening fast, 'white-horses' are showing upon the heaving seas ahead, and the little boat plunges heavier into each following surge, shipping every now and again an awkward comber into the well.

'Look out, helmsman; starboard, hard!'

The paddle dips sharply twice, and she swings round just in time to meet a huge seething roller stem on; the next instant, her bows are buried deep under the hissing water, and then, with a gallant stagger, she shakes herself free, and flinging the glistening spray from off her arched deck, glides down into a hollow of the waves. It is too rough now to keep our course parallel to the coast, and we must stand out to sea and meet the wind-waves; for, to let her get broadside on, the end would be speedy. So the *Volsung*

turns away from the land, and faces the wild waste of tossing waters, struggling bravely ahead, though she quivers at each heavy sea, which dashes her bows under up to the swinging mast. But the constant deluge forward is beginning to tell, and so much water has come aboard, that she rolls uncomfortably, and lifts less readily to meet the waves. The skipper slips off his oilskin jacket and tucks it over the apron, to keep out the falling combers, and takes to baling with his sou'-wester, leaving one hand free to hold the paddle and keep her head up. But do all he can, the water does not lessen in the hold; and for a moment or two he loses heart, and is half-minded to let his ship drift before the waves; it will be very awkward, to say the least, if she fills and goes gunwale under, for though the land is only half a mile away, and a sharp swim might reach it, yet, there is no landing at the face of those cliffs where the surf is flinging the spray high; and besides, the brave boat, companion of many a pleasant voyage, will be lost. A glance seawards shows a big steamer forging past, so close, we can read the name on her bows, and see the faces of the passengers crowding her decks; and the officer on the bridge, who is looking at us through his glass, waves a cheering hand. In a second the skipper is himself again; the honour of the blue cipher burgee of the Royal Canoe Club is in his hands; and at it the *Volsung* goes again, with a secret feeling of joy that she is not quite alone now amongst the tumbling billows. By the time the *General Havelock* is growing small in the distance, we are off the Lighthouse Bay, determined to run ashore here, bale the canoe out, and leave her with the coastguards. Turning deftly on a wave-top, the pilot steers her cautiously before the seas; and soon the tired crew tumble out joyfully as she takes the beach on the back of a comber.

By the time she has been pumped dry, the wind has dropped, and the sea will soon go down considerably; spirits pluck up again, and we determine not to forsake the staunch little craft, nor leave her in strange quarters, but make a bold dash round and home to Bridlington Quay; so, through the surf she is launched again, and all hands, drenched but resolute, jump aboard, and out to sea again.

Plunge, plunge, the spray flies high;
Rush, rush, the foam spins by.

Yet we manage to round the Head at last, and with a good tide still under us, stand rapidly across Bridlington Bay; and soon the brown piers and red-tiled roofs rise up ahead, a welcome sight. A little later, and the *Volsung* is being carried into the coastguards' boathouse, and the skipper, who is at the bows, runs his head against a line of garments dripping in the gloom. 'Why, Roberts, what's all this?'

'Drowned men's clothes, sir! A coble has gone down in a squall this afternoon with her three hands, and it's only their kit here was saved.'

A feeling of gratitude to One aloft creeps into the skipper's heart as he thinks how the squall which gave the *Volsung* such a buffeting sent a stout boat to the bottom, and that three poor

souls were fighting vainly for dear life with the pitiless sea, as, carelessly happy, he made his way safely through its tossing waters 'Round Flamborough Head.'

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

CHAPTER XXXII.

NOTHING happened of any importance before their return to Eaton Square. Markham, hopping about with a queer sidelong motion he had, his little eyes screwed up with humorous meaning, seemed to Frances to recover his spirits after the Winterbourn episode was over, which was the subject—though that, of course, she did not know—of half the voluminous correspondence of all the ladies and gentlemen in the house, whose letters were so important a part of their existence. Before a week was over, all Society was aware of the fact that Ralph Winterbourn had been nearly dying at Markham Priory; that Lady Markham was in 'a state' which baffled description, and Markham himself so changed as to be scarcely recognisable; but that, fortunately, the crisis had been tided over, and everything was still problematical. But the problem was so interesting, that one perfumed epistle after another carried it to curious wits all over the country, and a new light upon the subject was warmly welcomed in a hundred Easter meetings. What would Markham do? What would Nelly do? Would their friendship end in the vulgar way, in a marriage? Would they venture, in face of all prognostications, to keep it up as a friendship, when there was no longer any reason why it should not ripen into love? Or would they, frightened by all the inevitable comments which they would have to encounter, stop short altogether, and fly from each other?

Such a 'case' is a delightful thing to speculate upon. At the Priory, it could only be discussed in secret conclave; and though no doubt the experienced persons chiefly concerned were quite conscious of the subject which occupied their friends' thoughts, there was no further reference made to it between them, and everything went on as it had always done. The night before their return to town, Markham, in the solitude of the house, from which all the guests had just departed, called Frances outside to bear him company while he smoked his cigarette. He was walking up and down on the lawn in the gray stillness of a cloudy warm evening, when there was no light to speak of anywhere, and yet a good deal to be seen through the wavering grayness of sky and sea. A few stars, very mild and indistinct, looked out at the edges of the clouds here and there—the great water-line widened and cleared towards the horizon; and in the far distance, where a deeper grayness showed the mainland, the light of a lighthouse surprised the dark by slow continual revolutions. There was no moon; something softer, more seductive than even the moon, was in this absence of light.

'Well—now they're gone, what do you think of them, Fan? They're very good specimens of the English country-house party—all kinds: the respectable family, the sturdy old fogey, the

rich young man without health, and the muscular young man without money.' There had been, it is needless to say, various other members of the party, who, being quite unimportant to this history, need not be mentioned here. 'What do you think of them, little un? You have your own way of seeing things.'

'I—like them all well enough, Markham,' without enthusiasm Frances replied.

'That is comprehensive at least. So do I, my dear. It would not have occurred to me to say it; but it is just the right thing to say. They pull you to pieces almost before your face; but they are not ill-natured. They tell all sorts of stories about each other'—

'No, Markham; I don't think that is just.'

'—Without meaning any harm,' he went on. 'Fan, in countries where conversation is cultivated, perhaps people don't talk scandal—I only say perhaps—but here we are forced to take to it for want of anything else to say.—What did your Giovannis and Giacomos talk of in your village out yonder?' Markham pointed towards the clear blue-gray line of the horizon, beyond which lay America, if anything; but he meant distance, and that was enough.

'They talked—about the olives, how they were looking, and if it was going to be a bad or an indifferent year.'

'And then?'

'About the *forestieri*, if many were coming, and whether it would be a good season for the hotels; and about tying up the palms, to make them ready for Easter,' said Frances, resuming, with a smile about her lips. 'And about how old Pietro's son had got such a good appointment in the post-office, and had bought little Nina a pair of earrings as long as your finger; for he was to marry Nina, you know.'

'Oh, was he? Go on. I am very much interested.—Didn't they say Mr Whatever-his-name-is wanted to get out of it, and that there never would have been any engagement, had not Miss Nina's mother?'

'O Markham,' cried Frances in surprise, 'how could you possibly know?'

'I was reasoning from analogy, Fan.—Yes, I suppose they do it all the world over. And it is odd—isn't it?—that, knowing what they are sure to say, we ask them to our houses, and put the keys of all our skeleton cupboards into their hands.'

'Do you think that is true, that dreadful idea about the skeleton? I am sure'—

'What are you sure of, my little dear?'

'I was going to say, O Markham! that I was sure, at home, we had no skeleton; and then I remembered'—

'I understand,' he said kindly. 'It was not a skeleton to speak of, Fan. There is nothing particularly bad about it. If you had met it out walking, you would not have known it for a skeleton. Let us say a mystery, which is not such a mouth-filling word.'

'Sir Thomas told me,' said Frances with some timidity; 'but I am not sure that I understood. Markham! what was it really about?'

Her voice was low and diffident, and at first he only shook his head. 'About nothing,' he said; 'about—me. Yes, more than anything else, about me. That is how— No, it isn't,

he added, correcting himself. 'I always must have cared for my mother more than for any woman. She has always been my greatest friend, ever since I can remember anything. We seem to have been children together, and to have grown up together. I was everything to her for a dozen years, and then—your father came between us. He hated me—and I tormented him.'

'He could not hate you, Markham. Oh, no, no!'

'My little Fan, how can a child like you understand? Neither did I understand, when I was doing all the mischief. Between twelve and eighteen, I was an imp of mischief, a little demon. It was fun to me to bait that thin-skinned man, that jumped at everything. The explosion was fun to me too. I was a little beast. And then I got the mother to myself again.—Don't kill me, my dear. I am scarcely sorry now. We have had very good times since, I with my parent, you with yours—till that day,' he added, flinging away the end of his cigarette, 'when mischief again prompted me to let Con know where he was, which started us all again.'

'Did you always know where we were?' she asked. Strangely enough, this story did not give her any angry feeling towards Markham. It was so far off, and the previous relations of her long-separated father and mother were as a fairy tale to her, confusing and almost incredible, which she did not take into account as matter of fact at all. Markham had delivered these confessions slowly, as they turned and re-turned up and down the lawn. There was not light enough for either to see the expression in the other's face, and the veil of the darkness added to the softening effect. The words came out in short sentences, interrupted by that little business of puffing at the cigarette, letting it go out, stopping to strike a fusee and relight it, which so often forms the byplay of an important conversation, and sometimes breaks the force of painful revelations. Frances followed everything with an absorbed but yet half-dreamy attention, as if the red glow of the light, the exclamation of impatience when the cigarette was found to have gone out, the very perfume of the fusee in the air, were part and parcel of it. And the question she asked was almost mechanical, a part of the business too, striking naturally from the last thing he had said as sparks flew from the perfumed light.

'Not where,' he said. 'But I might have known, had I made any attempt to know. The mother sent her letters through the lawyer, and of course we could have found out. It was thrust upon me at last by one of those meddling fools that go everywhere. And then my old demon got possession of me, and I told Con.' Here he gave a low chuckle, which seemed to escape him in spite of himself. 'I am laughing,' he said—'pay attention, Fan—at myself. Of course I have learned to be sorry for—some things—the imp has put me up to; but I can't get the better of that little demon—or of this little beggar, if you like it better. It's queer phraseology, I suppose; but I prefer the other form.'

'And what,' said Frances, in the same dreamy way, drawn on, she was not conscious how, by

something in the air, by some current of thought which she was not aware of—'what do you mean to do now?'

He started from her side as if she had given him a blow. 'Do now?' he cried, with something in his voice that shook off the spell of the situation and aroused the girl at once to the reality of things. She had no guidance of his looks, for, as has been said, she could not see them; but there was a curious thrill in his voice of present alarm and consciousness, as if her innocent question struck sharply against some fact of very different solidity and force from those far-off shadowy facts which he had been telling her. 'Do now? What makes you think I am going to do anything at all?'

His voice fell away in a sort of quaver at the end of these words.

'I do not think it; I—I—don't think anything, Markham; I—don't—know anything.'

'You ask very pat questions all the same, my little Fan. And you have got a pair of very good eyes of your own in that little head. And if you have got any light to throw upon the subject, my dear, produce it; for I'll be bothered if I know.'

Just then, a window opened in the gloom. 'Children,' said Lady Markham's voice, 'are you there? I think I see something like you, though it is so dark.—Bring your little sister in, Markham. She must not catch cold on the eve of going back to town.'

'Here is the little thing, mammy. Shall I hand her in to you by the window?—It makes me feel very frisky to hear myself addressed as children,' he cried with his chuckle of easy laughter.—'Here, Fan; run in, my little dear, and be put to bed.'

But he did not go in with her. He kept outside in the quiet cool and freshness of the night, illuminating the dim atmosphere now and then with the momentary glow of another fusee. Frances from her room, to which she had shortly retired, heard the sound, and saw from her windows the sudden ruddy light a great many times before she went to sleep. Markham let his cigar go out oftener than she could reckon. He was too full of thought to remember his cigar.

They arrived in town when everybody was arriving, when even to Frances, in her inexperience, the rising tide was visible in the streets, and the air of a new world beginning, which always marks the commencement of the season. No doubt it is a new world to many virgin souls, though so stale and weary to most of those who tread its endless round. To Frances, everything was new; and a sense of the many wonderful things that awaited her got into the girl's head like ethereal wine, in spite of all the grave matters of which she was conscious, which lay under the surface, and were, if not skeletons in the closet, at least very serious drawbacks to anything bright that life could bring. Her knowledge of these drawbacks had been acquired so suddenly, and was so little dulled by habit, that it dwelt upon her mind much more than family mysteries usually dwell upon a mind of eighteen. But yet in the rush and exhilaration of new thoughts and anticipations, always so much more delicately bright than any reality,

she forgot that all was not as natural, as pleasant, as happy as it seemed. If Lady Markham had any consuming cares, she kept them shut away under that smiling countenance, which was as bright and peaceful as the morning. If Markham, on his side, was perplexed and doubtful, he came out and in with the same little chuckle of fun, the same humorous twinkle in his eyes. When these signs of tranquillity are so apparent, the young and ignorant can easily make up their minds that all is well. And Frances was to be 'presented'—a thought which made her heart beat. She was to be put into a court-train and feathers, she who as yet had never worn anything but the simple frock which she had so pleased herself to think was purely English in its unobtrusiveness and modesty. She was not quite sure that she liked the prospect; but it excited her all the same.

It was early in May, and the train and the court plumes were ready, when, going out one morning upon some small errand of her own, Frances met some one whom she recognised walking slowly along the long line of Eaton Square. She started at the sight of him, though he did not see her. He was going with a strange air of reluctance, yet anxiety, looking up at the houses, no doubt looking for Lady Markham's house, so absorbed that he neither saw Frances nor was disturbed by the startled movement she made, which must have caught a less preoccupied eye. She smiled to herself, after the first start, to see how entirely bent he was upon finding the house, and how little attention he had to spare for anything else. He was even more worn and pale, or rather gray, than he had been when he returned from India, she thought; and there was in him a slackness, a letting-go of himself, a weary look in his step and carriage, which proved, Frances thought, that the Riviera had done George Gaunt little good.

For it was certainly George Gaunt, still in his loose gray Indian clothes, looking like a man dropped from another hemisphere, investigating the numbers on the doors as if he but vaguely comprehended the meaning of them. But that there was in him that unmistakable air of soldier which no mufti can quite disguise, he might have been the Ancient Mariner in person, looking for the man whose fate it is to leave all the wedding-feasts of the world in order to hear that tale. What tale could young Gaunt have to tell? For a moment it flashed across the mind of Frances that he might be bringing bad news, that 'something might have happened,' that rapid conclusion to which the imagination is so ready to jump. An accident to her father or Constance? so bad, so terrible, that it could not be trusted to a letter, that he had been sent to break the news to them.

She had passed him by this time, being shy, in her surprise, of addressing the stranger all at once; but now she paused, and turned with a momentary intention of running after him and entreating him to tell her the worst. But then Frances recollected that this was impossible; that with the telegraph in active operation, no one would employ this lingering way of conveying news; and went on again, with her heart beating quieter, with a heightened colour, and a restrained impatience and eagerness of which she was half

ashamed. No, she would not turn back before she had done her little business. She did not want either the stranger himself or any one else to divine the flutter of pleasant emotion, the desire she had to see and speak with the son of her old friends. Yes, she said to herself, the son of her old friends—he who was the youngest, whom Mrs Gaunt used to talk of for hours, whose praises she was never weary of singing.

Frances smiled and blushed to herself as she hurried, perceptibly hurried, about her little affairs. Kind Mrs Gaunt had always had a secret longing to bring these two together. Frances would not turn back; but she quickened her pace, almost running, as near running as was decorous in London, to the lace-shop, to give the instructions which she had been charged with. No doubt, she said to herself, she would find him there when she got back. She had forgotten, perhaps, the fact that George Gaunt had given very little of his regard to her when he met her, though she was his mother's favourite, and had no eyes but for Constance. This was not a thing to dwell in the mind of a girl who had no jealousy in her, and who never supposed herself to be half as worthy of anybody's attention as Constance was. But, anyhow, she forgot it altogether, forgot to ask herself what in this respect might have happened in the meantime; and with her heart beating full of innocent eagerness, pleasure, and excitement, full of the hope of hearing about everybody, of seeing again through his eyes the dear little well-known world, which seemed to lie so far behind her, hastened through her errands, and turned quickly home.

To her great surprise, as she came back, turning round the corner into the long line of pavement, she saw young Gaunt once more approaching her. He looked even more listless and languid now, like a man who had tried to do some duty, and failed, and was escaping, glad to be out of the way of it. This was a great deal to read in a man's face; but Frances was highly sympathetic, and divined it, knowing in herself many of those devices of shy people, which shy persons divine. Fortunately, she saw him some way off, and had time to overcome her own shyness and take the initiative. She went up to him fresh as the May morning, blushing and smiling, and put out her hand. 'Captain Gaunt?' she said. 'I knew I could not be mistaken.—Oh, have you just come from Bordighera? I am so glad to see any one from home!'

'Do you call it home, Miss Waring?—Yes, I have just come. I—I—have a number of messages, and some parcels, and— But I thought you might perhaps be out of town, or busy, and that it would be best to send them.'

'Is that why you are turning your back on my mother's house? or did you not know the number? I saw you before, looking—but I did not like to speak.'

'I—thought you might be out of town,' he repeated, taking no notice of her question; 'and that perhaps the post'—

'O no,' cried Frances, whose shyness was of the cordial kind. 'Now you must come back and see mamma. She will want to hear all about Constance.—Are they all well, Captain

Gaunt? Of course you must have seen them constantly—and Constance. Mamma will want to hear everything.'

'Miss Waring is very well,' he said with a blank countenance, from which he had done his best to dismiss all expression.

'And papa? and dear Mrs Gaunt, and the colonel, and everybody?—Oh, there is so much that letters can't tell.—Come back now. My mother will be so glad to see you, and Markham; you know Markham already.'

Young Gaunt made a feeble momentary resistance. He murmured something about an engagement, about his time being very short; but as he did so, turned round languidly and went with her, obeying, as seemed, the eager impulse of Frances, rather than any will of his own.

HOW TO BECOME A PATENTEE.

By an Act passed in 1883, inventors are enabled to obtain letters-patent for their inventions for four years at a cost of four pounds; provided, of course, they take out the patent themselves without employing an agent. Previously to 1883, the fees were very heavy, and many useful but possibly unremunerative articles were, in consequence, left unpatented and unmanufactured. How great a success the Act has been, the following figures show: In the first nine months of 1883, four thousand six hundred and fifty-six applications for letters-patent were made; in the corresponding period for the following year, when the Act was in force, the number was thirteen thousand and twelve. Where the invention is of a very complicated nature, or likely to be of great commercial value, inventors should certainly employ patent agents; but in many cases there is no obstacle in the way of the inventor obtaining letters-patent himself without the intervention of an agent.

Before detailing the simple but necessary procedure connected with the Patent Office, it will be well to consider what inventions are patentable. Bare or abstract philosophical principles are not patentable; the principle must be embodied in a practical form; and the patent is taken out not for the principle, but for the mode of carrying it into effect. It is only the new part of the machine or apparatus which can be patented; and if any material part of the alleged invention should prove either not useful or not novel, the patent is void. Want of novelty is a fatal defect. The invention must be of real value, and must not have been used in public or by the public before the date of the patent. The thing may have been invented before; but letters-patent may be obtained for it, if it has not been used or sold publicly, or a description of it published in a printed book sold—but not necessarily published—in this country. Where the inventor is not quite certain that no patent has been taken out for such an invention previously, he should search through the specifications at the Patent Office, 25 Southampton Buildings, London, W.C. The specifications are classified, so that the search, though tedious, is of no great difficulty. If the inventor is unable to make the search, a patent agent will do so for a moderate fee.

Supposing, now, that our budding patentee has invented something which is novel, useful, and of value, his next step is to obtain through a district post-office or at the Inland Revenue Office, Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, W.C., the following forms: One application for patent; two provisional specifications. Before these forms—for which there is no charge—can be filled up, the title or name of the invention must be determined. The title must indicate generally the subject-matter of the invention. It must not be too large, uncertain, or at variance with the description given in the provisional or complete specifications. Samples of titles are: An Improvement in Locomotive Steam-engines; A Roller Skate; A New Apparatus for Sweeping Chimneys. The application must now be filled in, full instructions for which are given on the form. It must bear a one-pound stamp. At the end of it must be a declaration that the person applying for the patent is the true and first inventor, and this declaration must be made before a justice of the peace, or a person authorised to administer oaths, in any court in the United Kingdom. The fee on making the declaration is usually half-a-crown. The application form being now properly filled in, the inventor should fill in the form of provisional specification, attending carefully to the directions given on the form which do not require explanation. The provisional specification must describe the nature of the invention. Minute details need not be given; a general description is sufficient. The provisional specification is only intended to assume the identity of the invention, to disclose it in its rough state, and protect the inventor until such time as he can perfect its details. At the same time, every part of the invention, except details, must be foreshadowed. The application duly stamped, and the provisional specification, *in duplicate*—drawings must also be sent if the invention cannot be explained without them—should now be delivered or sent by post to The Comptroller, Patent Office, 25 Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, who will examine them, and notify the applicant if they are accepted. The applicant is now in this position: for the next nine months, he may publish or publicly use his invention without losing his right of ultimately obtaining letters-patent; but during this time, any one else can manufacture and sell the invention without being in any way liable to the inventor. The only real advantage, therefore, of this provisional protection, as it is called, is, that for a period of nine months before obtaining letters-patent, the inventor is protected from any other person applying for and obtaining letters-patent for the same invention. It is a popular error to suppose that a patent can be obtained for nine months at a cost of one pound.

Now comes the final and most important part of the whole proceedings. Before the end of the nine months, the inventor must obtain from the Inland Revenue Office two complete specification forms, fill them up carefully according to directions, stamp one of them with a three-pound stamp, and send them—with drawings, if required—to the Comptroller at the Patent Office. One will be a counterpart of the other.

In the complete specification the invention must be described clearly and fully, so that others, when the patent has expired, may work the invention if they desire to do so. The nature of the invention must be particularly described and ascertained, and in what manner it is to be performed. The inventor must disclose everything, for if he keeps anything back and does not act in good faith, he runs the risk of having his patent declared void. Care must be taken, in describing a machine part of which is new and part old, to state clearly how much is claimed as new. Every essential part of the invention must be mentioned, and the description must be intelligible to workmen of ordinary skill. In due course, the complete specification—if in order—will be accepted, and the patent sealed. If it so happens that the inventor has completed his invention, and has attained the maximum of simplicity with the minimum of cost, before taking any steps to obtain a patent, he should not trouble to obtain provisional protection at all, but send in at once a complete specification with the application. This is of course the simpler method; and the fees, or rather stamps, are the same, namely, a one-pound stamp on the application and three pounds on one of the complete specification. The inventor now possesses the sole right to deal with his invention for a period of four years. Should his invention prove of such value that he is desirous of extending his patent, he can do so for four years at a yearly cost of ten pounds; and for a still further two years at a yearly cost of fifteen pounds; and for a further four years at a yearly cost of twenty pounds.

It will be useful to inventors to know that the Patents Act of 1883 and the Rules can be obtained from 38 Cursitor Street, Chancery Lane, W.C.; also that the Patent Office, 25 Southampton Buildings, W.C., is open from ten to four every day except Sundays and public holidays. Complete specifications of existing and old patents are kept on sale there; and an old specification is often useful as a guide to the inventor in drawing up his own. A register of patents is kept at the office, which is open to the public. There is also a library, which is free to the public, where all the publications of the office are to be seen, and also the leading British and foreign scientific journals and textbooks in various departments of science and art.

MR L'ESTRANGE.

IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAP. III.

THE reputation of the Atlantic Ocean has been so utterly lost, that no abuse of it by me can defame it. As the most whimsical, wrathful, spiteful of oceans, it is but too well known. It was my fate to be a victim of its temper for six days, during which I endured all that a poor nervous invalid can suffer. Storms blew all round the compass. I seemed to be rolling night and day unceasingly, now in this direction, now in that. My bed was like a billow, I like a log tumbling over it. The steward who attended to me coolly spoke of the string of tempests as spring gales of rather a gentle sort. I have the impression that I did not sleep during these six

days and nights; but this nobody will credit. I admit that I was often in a state of dull lethargy, incapable of using limbs or senses, yet conscious of what was going on near me.

Theodore was a born sailor; the more Boreas blew, the livelier he became. For the first two days, the kind fellow tended me like a woman; brought the doctor to see me, ministered to my humours, importuned me with the robust man's consolations. I begged him to leave me in peace. The third day he obeyed me almost literally; for on that day I do not remember seeing him, except when he came to bed. His berth was over mine, and he had that night a long struggle to get into it, which put me into a fever to witness. I thought it was the raging waters that made him so clumsy; I now know that he had been drinking champagne. On the fourth day I saw little of him; the fifth, he came into our stateroom several times and hurriedly. He always spoke to me, and appeared to look at me with a peculiar anxiety. Once the steward came to the door and could not open it. Theodore rose from the floor, and in an agitated voice asked what was wanted. He did not open the door, which he had bolted. I was getting a little better, and this incident struck me. Subsequent events no doubt intensified my remembrance. I seemed to know that something furtive was going on, and was uneasy, but too shattered by weakness to bestir myself.

The sixth day, Theodore remained in his berth until the afternoon. I heard him groan over my head several times and toss about uneasily. About four o'clock he got up, after drinking his fourth glass of brandy and soda. The steward eyed him very strangely, I thought; and then the man eyed me inquiringly, as he held the empty glass and talked about the improving weather. After dressing, Theodore sat on the sofa staring at the floor, as though looking right through the ship's bottom. He was pale, shivered from time to time, muttered to himself, but never took his eyes from the floor. I grew alarmed as I watched him. At first I thought he was going to be sea-sick after all; that his reckless indulgence in food, drink, and tobacco had found his point of gastric toleration. But the expression of despair which cut deeper and deeper into his face, making its whiteness more marble-like continually, was not that of a sickening man; or rather, it was the manifestation of a mind diseased.

'What ails you, Theodore?' I asked, in a tone so hoarse that I did not recognise my own voice. Illness had indeed changed me in every way.

He jumped up, as if he had been struck in the back; his eyes ran round the room, then rested on me, as if he did not know me. For a moment we stared in silence.

'How do you feel, Charley?' he said, advancing to me.

'How do you feel, Theodore?'

'Me?' rubbing his head with both hands energetically—'me, Charley? Why, you know I am always first-class.'

'Don't try to impose upon me, brother; you are ill—worse than I have been.'

'Impose! What on earth do you mean?' His face was scarlet; he shook, and he caught at the side of the berth, as if he were falling.

I got on to my elbow and tried to leave the bed, but the effort was too great; my head swam; I fell back helplessly. I lay still awhile. Theodore returned to his seat on the sofa, and again fixed his eyes on the floor as before. The dinner-bell rang.

'Are you not going to dinner, Theodore?' I asked.

He did not reply. I repeated the question. He looked at me, muttered, and began to move about.

Again I asked the question.

'No; I do not want to eat,' he said shortly.

'You have eaten nothing to-day.'

'I am not hungry.—Don't bother me, Charley.'

'Theodore, I insist upon knowing what has produced this extraordinary change in you. Tell me, or I will get up and bring the doctor. What has made you ill?'

'Really and truly, Charley, I am not ill at all; a bit out of sorts.—Lie still; you are as weak as a kitten.—What will you have for dinner?'

'I will not eat again, until you tell me what is preying upon your mind. You frighten me, Theodore. Only something of the most extraordinary nature could have metamorphosed you into the haggard, harassed wretch that you have become. You are a perfect wreck.'

He laughed, a wild, passionate, mocking laugh, and turned his face from me.

The steward knocked at the door, calling to ask if I would have some dinner.

'Do have something, Charley,' said Theodore, who became suddenly collected, 'and I will dine with you.—Here, steward, come in.'

The door opened, the steward entered, and with him the doctor. After a few inquiries regarding my health, the latter said to Theodore: 'I want to show you those things I spoke of in my cabin.'

My brother looked at him with intense surprise, then a flash of understanding shot into his eyes, and he said in a quavering voice: 'I will be with you in five minutes; I am not dressed.'

I had not been alone many instants, when the steward entered my room in a stealthy manner, and came close to me, whispering: 'Has your brother told you?'

'Told me! What?'

'Of the row in the smoke-room last night?'

'What do you mean?'

'Why, you see, he was playing cards and lost a lot of money—so it is reported, for of course I was not there; and it ended in him knocking a gentleman down.'

I groaned so deeply, that the man was frightened, and made clumsy excuses for mentioning the matter. I pressed his hand reassuringly, but I could not speak; then I motioned to him to leave me. How can I describe the abyss of despair into which the story hurled me? Theodore gambling, drinking, quarrelling, going to the bad already! Gambling! All at once recurred the scene of the bank-notes he had held before me when I fell ill. I had forgotten it. Then returned the boy's wild behaviour at the dinner-table. L'Estrange—Ah! that evil being *had* justified my opinion of him. Oh, why had I been ill? My absence had permitted this terrible debasement of my brother.

Hours seemed to pass before Theodore returned. He did not speak, but began to pull off his clothes, as if going to bed. The light was turned down to a glimmer. He thought I was asleep.

'Do not undress, Theodore,' I said, as calmly as I could; 'turn up the light.'

'Do you want something, Charley?'

'Yes, I want to talk to you.'

'Put it off till morning; I'm so tired that I cannot talk.' He sighed wearily.

'No, Theodore; I must talk, however tired you are. Come here, unhappy boy, and tell me what you have been doing. Whom did you strike in the smoke-room?'

He recoiled from me and made for the door. I sprang out of my berth and caught him by the arm.

'Let me go, Charley, for mercy's sake! I cannot remain here; it will kill me.' His looks of horror, his mad efforts to tear my hands from him, his ecstasy of terror, for an instant stunned me. Then an icy quiet came over him. I knew that something supremely serious had happened, to have changed my brother so absolutely.

'Sit down!' I said authoritatively. 'Tell me the whole truth; I can bear it.'

He looked at me as the bird at the rattlesnake, half fearing, half confident.

I turned to increase the light, and he again became restless. 'Now, Theodore, out with it. No good can come from delay, and concealment is impossible; others will tell me. Let me know the extent of my shame from the author of it. What have you done?'

'Don't, don't speak like that, Charley; I can't bear it.'

'I thought you were a man, and afraid of nothing.'

'I was so once, my brother. I am not a man any longer; I am a villain, a fratricide. Oh, heavenly Father, why have I lived to commit such a crime!'

These dreadful words tore my soul as grape-shot ravages the flesh. I stared into the weeping eyes of the miserable boy; I placed my hands upon his head, to draw him nearer to me, looking into the depths of his being. 'Explain yourself. Have you seriously injured L'Estrange?'

'L'Estrange, Charley!' Here he assumed an expression so utterly unlike what I had expected, that I believed he had gone insane.

'Yes, L'Estrange, the man you struck in your gambling quarrel.'

'I do not understand you, Charley,' said Theodore, in something like his ordinary manner.

'Did you not strike him?'

'No.'

'Did you not gamble with him?'

'No; that is, he was my partner.'

I put my head against the wall; the confusion of my mind was unbearable. 'Why are you so agitated, then? Why did you call yourself a fratricide? What is the meaning of all you have been manifesting for the last dozen hours?'

'Really, Charley, I cannot tell you—at least, not just now. In the morning.'

'Do you wish wholly to shatter my mind and

body, Theodore? You have committed some deep wrong. My ignorance of the facts is a thousand times worse than the knowledge. If you refuse to tell me, I shall go to the smoke-room, if it is now occupied, and inquire from the attendant. If he is in bed, I shall waken him.'

'But he will only tell you that the gentleman is all right again. The doctor says I have not hurt him; and we have become good friends again.'

I listened to him as if he were talking in an unknown tongue. After a long silence, I said: 'Then you have been suffering from a fit of temporary insanity, brought on by drinking and gambling?'

He turned away from me, trembled, did not speak.

Again my fears returned. 'You are concealing something hideous from me, Theodore. It is infamy to do so. I ask for the last time, will you tell me what you have done? Answer, or I leave this cabin to return no more. If you have not confidence in me, your brother, your friend, then all is over between us. I shall not go to California, but will find some employment in New York. You must go your own way—we shall henceforth be strangers.'

A deep feeling of solemnity thrilled me as I spoke. Theodore did not answer; but he sobbed hysterically for a few minutes, and then threw himself at my feet, pulling my knees with convulsive anguish. 'I cannot endure my misery; it is too great, Charley. Would that I could atone by dying at your feet! O my broken-hearted mother!—my unhappy sisters!'

'This is the very height of folly or remorse,' I cried in a terrible agitation. 'Theodore, in the name of those dear creatures at home, what have you done, that you act thus?'

'I will confess, Charley,' he whispered, hiding his head in my breast and pulling me tightly. 'Do not forgive me, though; no; God himself cannot forgive me. I have—I have stolen the money from your box—we are beggars!'

The shock was supreme! The calamity was measureless, final! A cry of despair burst from my burning lips. Slowly at first, then quicker and quicker, I realised that I had duties to perform towards the lost creature, trembling at my feet, towards those helpless suffering women, dependent upon me for all things now. Though black ruin was crashing around me on every side, I must not despair; I must fight for them who had no champion but me. The hugeness of the misfortune began to steady me as I thought of it. We should reach New York more abject than the pauper emigrant. What could we do?

'Did you take all the money?' I asked Theodore in a quiet voice.

'All that was in the pocket-book,' he answered whisperingly.

'Have you lost it all?'

'Yes.'

'Who won it?' I demanded, a sudden curiosity arising in me. Up to this point, I had been oblivious of the history of Theodore's gambling transactions; now it seemed that I ought to know how the boy had gone wrong. In the effort to adjust myself to a new and calamitous situation, I must begin at the beginning.

'Who won the money from you?'

'A young man. He is named Barker.'

'Did L'Estrange win anything from you?'

'Not a shilling, Charley.'

'Tell me all about it. I am settling down. Besides, you have told me the worst.'

'O Charley, I do not know how I can expose my infamy to you without you spurning me from you, as the most cruel and infatuated man in the world.'

'Spare all that sort of talk, Theodore. Tell me the bare facts. Who is this man Barker? An acquaintance of L'Estrange?'

'No, no; they are total strangers, I assure you. L'Estrange has lost more than I have.'

'Enough of generalities; come to particulars. Tell me all, and from the beginning.'

'I will, Charley.—Well, I first played with L'Estrange, just we two. I won a lot of money from him, I don't know how. He almost seemed to be giving it to me. We played at whist, double-dummy. You remember how excited I was, and the champagne, and the greenbacks that I showed you. Well, from that I fell into a gambling fever, and I won from L'Estrange quite a hundred pounds. Then others began to play with us, the man Barker, and a young gentleman, the son of an English nobleman. This latter lost a great deal to L'Estrange; but L'Estrange lost it to me, and I lost it to Barker. Then we began to play at American games, that I never had heard of, quick games, over in a few minutes. It went on day by day. I was always in a state of excitement. I once had five hundred pounds in my pocket. I thought I was going to make our fortunes before we got ashore. It was not for the money, Charley—I swear it was not; it was to make us both rich, so that we might send for mother and sisters without delay. I really did think that I was destined to obtain a heap of money, and all at once—'

'Poor simpleton!' I interrupted. 'And did you believe that money so got could bring a blessing to us? Do you think that I would have shared in the fruits of gambling, Theodore?'

'Do not upbraid me, Charley; I loathe myself enough; ah! may you never know the awfulness of my remorse!' Still, I did wish the money for all our sakes. I was not selfish; at least I am free from that. And you do not know what a fearful thing temptation is, Charley. I cannot tell you how the passion to win grew upon me; I could have sat up day and night playing incessantly. I wanted nothing to eat; drink, stimulating drink, was all I needed. Our stakes grew by degrees, until hundreds of pounds were won and lost in an hour or two.'

'And was there nobody sufficiently manly or sufficiently moral to protest against such a scandal?' I exclaimed indignantly. 'How could gentlemen witness a boy like you playing for hundreds without stopping the game?'

'Nobody knew what the stakes were but ourselves,' said Theodore earnestly. 'We played with counters, and the winnings were paid in the cabins of the players; we settled up three times a day. I was wonderfully lucky at first, and quite surprised at myself; the cards seemed to be charmed in my favour. Sometimes I lost nearly all my gains; but I always had a little left over from my first winnings to begin again,

until yesterday. My luck quite deserted me. The young Englishman had lost all his money; and another gentleman took his place, who had never played with us before. L'Estrange and I were partners; Barker and the stranger against us. Between breakfast and lunch we did pretty well; but in the afternoon, fortune went quite away from me: I rose up at dinner-time having lost two hundred pounds. I was almost frantic, for I did not know what I should do to pay. I spoke to L'Estrange, who asked me all about our affairs.'

'Did he suggest that you should take the money from my portmanteau, Theodore?' I cried, all my suspicions of the man's evil character rushing back upon me.

'No, Charley; but he said that my spell of bad luck would be over perhaps, then, and that I would be sure to win heavily next time. Besides, he said, I was bound to settle up, or he would be disgraced as my partner; so the evil spirit led me to take your money, Charley. I put off the thing as long as I could; I stood looking over the side of the ship, and a trifle would have decided me to jump overboard; and then I thought of you and home, and I grew more desperate than to commit suicide; I determined to try the cards again; so I took the keys from your pocket, finding you asleep, and I hastened back to play. But bad luck went on; I lost and lost, until I was again some hundreds to the worse. I need say no more, Charley; I have ruined you and all of us.'

The miserable boy threw himself on the floor, as if he would annihilate the memory of his sin by dashing out his brains.

I lifted him up, and strove to comfort him. My tenderness made his anguish the more poignant.

'Do not be kind to me; I can bear anything but that,' he groaned.

'Who, then, shall lead you back to better ways but me, Theodore? You have fallen, poor boy; yet you must rise again. It is a frightful decadence at the threshold of life. But we will bear it together, my brother.—And now, tell me of your quarrel. Whom did you strike?'

'Barker. I could not pay the whole of my losses. He said something insulting, and I knocked him under the table.'

'Do you owe him something still?'

'Yes, fifty pounds. But the doctor and some other gentlemen have made things pleasant again. I am sorry I lost my temper. The doctor has assured me that Barker is quite well again. L'Estrange has promised to square my debt; and he says I can pay him at any time.'

'I am quite astounded at L'Estrange proving a friend, Theodore; I had the worst feeling against him that I have known in all my experience of men.'

'You have been altogether wrong, Charley; L'Estrange is a good fellow.'

Day had broken over the placid sea before our conversation terminated. Exhausted by so many agitations, and with leaden hearts, we fell into our berths like dying men.

I did not wake till noon. Theodore slept, or feigned to do so. I got up, and looked out of the porthole upon the dazzling waters. The weather was magnificent. I dressed quickly,

and left the cabin. I wanted to be alone, to ponder on the frightful position of our affairs. At the instant of waking, all had burst upon me afresh; but the repose had given my mind both strength and calm. In a few days we should be at New York, penniless, planless; something must be schemed before we were shot upon the quayside like human rubbish. Further, I must preoccupy Theodore's mind with the future, or the wretched boy would do further mischief. I knew how much he would suffer from the unappeasable torments of remorse, from the shattering of all his vain self-confidences, from the shame he had heaped upon himself and me.

The deck was crowded with passengers; for, with fine weather all the invalids had been brought from their cabins and placed on chairs and couches. I paid no attention to any one, but walked slowly, thinking as I had never done before, and resting against the bulwarks from time to time, when I grew faint with useless cogitation. No; I could not imagine any expedient in our case. Friendless, beggared, broken-hearted, dismayed, what *could* I do? I groaned in impotent agony, and stared at the glittering sea, though I saw it not.

'Etes-vous malade, encore, monsieur?'

I started and looked down, and saw, lying on a deck-lounge, the figure of a lady. Her veil was wreathed round her face, pale as death; two dark, burning, pitying eyes were fixed upon me.

'Do you not recall me?' asked the lady, still speaking in French.

A moment I was confused, then I remembered her, and replied: 'Pardon me, madame; I was preoccupied. I hope you are getting better. We have had rough weather.'

'You have suffered much, monsieur,' she rejoined, looking intently at me. 'What a change! Ah! the sea is terrible.'

'It is indeed, for poor weaklings like me, madame.' A bitter sigh followed my words.

'You are still very ill,' said the lady. 'I hope the weather will be fine until we reach New York; then you will be happy. We soon forget the discomforts of ship-life when we are on shore.'

A mournful smile was my only comment. What had I to expect ashore?

'You do not agree with me?' demanded the lady with surprise.

'I agree that I prefer the land to the sea; yet the land does not always bring happiness?'

'Happiness!' exclaimed she. 'Where do we find happiness? It is a phantom, not a reality. —Were you seeking happiness in America?'

'Yes; like millions, I am going with that intent, or rather I was.' I stopped, for a sudden sob choked me.

'You have been *very* ill, monsieur. You are quite unmanned. I did not think that the strong sex suffered so much.'

The lady's voice was tender and pitying; it affected me in a surprising manner. I bent my head and turned from her in a paroxysm of grief. How long the fit of mental agony lasted, I do not know; I seemed to wake out of a dream, trembling and ashamed of the weakness I had shown. The lady was speaking to her maid. I rose

from the seat I had fallen into quite unconsciously, but I was so weak that I sank down again.

'You are seriously ill,' said the lady; 'allow my maid to bring you something.' She then spoke rapidly to her attendant, who hurried away, and soon reappeared with a glass containing some sort of restorative. I drank it gratefully, and sank into a pleasant lethargy.

The lunch-bell rang; the deck became deserted; the lady and myself were alone. Gradually strength and calm returned, and I was able to thank the kind creature. Little by little our conversation expanded, until I had told her all about my plans being annihilated by my brother's folly. She was even more agitated than myself as I related the story; and at the close she got up from her couch, and begging me to excuse her hurried departure, left me.

MUSICAL INTERLOPERS.

WHEN stationed at —, in India, I was asked to preside at the little church harmonium, and for several years I filled that pleasant post. The first instrument we had was decidedly peculiar, and it required a good deal of physical exertion and no little art to bring forth any sound. As long as the dry weather lasted, we got on pretty well; but as soon as the rains fell and damp affected its mechanism, the result was terrible to sensitive nerves.

On coming into church one day and beginning the voluntary, I discovered that more than half the notes would not come up after being struck. The result, of course, conveyed to the congregation was that I was permanently holding down several octaves of a chromatic scale! My husband was fortunately near me; and with his energetic help—picking up each note as I played it—we got through the service as best we could. Before the next Sunday, it had been repaired a little; but there was always a rather painful uncertainty that a note might not suddenly shriek out unbidden. One day I discovered, to my surprise, that the harmonium was inhabited by a mouse. It is possible that his establishment within, and the effects of his appetite on the felts and linings, may in some measure account for the surprising vagaries of the instrument. I had left my high seat and moved to a more comfortable one during the sermon, when I saw a little head with a pair of beady black eyes peeping out from under the pedals. After looking round and finding all was quiet, he sallied out, took a constitutional in the neighbourhood, and before the end of the sermon, had returned to his home. After this we used to see him nearly every Sunday.

One day, just after we had got to church, in came one of our dogs! She had been tied up when we left our house, which was about a quarter of a mile off; but guessing, probably from the sound of the bell, where we had gone, she followed us directly she was let go. The harmonium was fortunately near the door, so that she saw me the moment she came in, and being a thoroughly well-trained dog, lay perfectly still beside my chair. Of course, I was terribly anxious lest the poor mouse should appear, for Bessie, being a splendid rat-ter,

would without a doubt have given chase, and caused a scene. However, the little inmate of the harmonium was either 'out,' or displayed marvellous discretion. Not so a squirrel. During the sermon, one of these pretty creatures, so common in India, came in through a gap at the top of the 'chick'—a semi-transparent curtain hung in the outer doorways of all Indian houses, to keep out glare and flying insects—and proceeded to run up and down it within a few feet of us! Of course, Bessie had seen it at once; and there she sat with ears erect and straining eyes, shivering with excitement, watching its every movement. After we had endured several minutes of suspense, the unconscious object of our attention, with a whisk of the tail, jumped out through a hole in the chick, and we breathed freely once more.

About this time the Bishop of Calcutta came up to consecrate a piece of ground to be added to the cemetery—a very old one, where rest the bones of heroes who fell hard by, fighting under General Lake, at the commencement of this century. The harmonium had been taken over in a hand-cart, that I might accompany the hymns and chants. During the ceremony, the mouse stole out as usual, unconscious of the solemnity of the occasion. How he managed to get in again so as to be carried back to the church, I do not know; but there he was the following Sunday. Some months later, the new American organ arrived, and the old one, with its inmate no doubt, was sold, and we lost sight of it.

This was a harmless tenant. I heard of another and very dangerous one. A little boy we knew used to amuse himself by playing on an old harmonium. He found one day that the pedals had become very stiff, and he experienced great difficulty in working them. Soon after, a pianotuner who twice a year makes the round of all stations where he can find employment, happened to come to —; and on taking the child's instrument to pieces to examine it, found a large cobra coiled up inside—dead! It is impossible to tell what induced it to seek such a strange and, at times, noisy abode. The explanation may possibly be found in the well-known love of serpents for music.

MR CHUCKLES'S CHICKS.

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS.—ACT I.

'A BAD one!' angrily exclaimed Mr Christopher Chuckles as he completed the chipping of his first egg at breakfast, at the same moment inhaling an aroma which strongly pointed to the conclusion that the albuminous product had been a very undesirable length of time an absentee from the nest.

'Try another, dear,' was the common-sense suggestion of the gentleman's better-half.

Her lord and master grumblingly complied; but almost shouted out in his wrath when he became aware of the unpleasant fact that egg number two was just as ancient a 'shopkeeper' as its predecessor. 'I will stand this sort of thing no longer,' he exclaimed; 'it is only by the

merest chance I ever obtain eggs fit for a Christian to eat!'

'Papa, dear, how dreadful you are to be sure,' pouted pretty Mary Ellen, aged twenty-two, the sole offspring of the Chuckleses.

'Christopher,' remonstrated Mrs Chuckles, 'although you may have some slight grounds of complaint, I think it would be more seemly were you to restrain those violent outbursts of ill-temper.'

'Madam,' said Mr Chuckles, in his grimmest manner, 'I will not discuss with the illogical female mind the relative force of language; I had much rather discuss my breakfast—that is, of course, should I be fortunate enough to discover anything that is edible.' And the irate Chuckles proceeded with savage impetuosity to operate on egg number three, which, luckily for the further harmony of the family breakfast-table, turned out fairly satisfactory.

After a few moments had tranquilly sped their soothing course, Mr Chuckles suddenly threw himself back in his capacious chair, a radiant glow of satisfaction spreading over his by no means attenuated features.

'O mamma, dear,' gleefully ejaculated Mary Ellen, 'see how pleased papa looks! I shouldn't wonder if he were going to tell us that he will take us somewhere for a day's outing. I vote for Brighton by the express.'

Mrs Chuckles, though equally pleased with her daughter to see the 'wreathed smiles' on her husband's face, refrained from hazarding an opinion as to the probability of that worthy volunteering to escort his family upon a day's pleasure.

Mr Chuckles remained perfectly oblivious to the idea that he had raised any pleasing anticipations whatever in the minds of his wife and daughter, but, with his eyes fixed upon the ceiling, appeared to be solving a mental arithmetical question. At length he broke the silence by abruptly exclaiming: 'Yes, I'll do it!'

'Do what?' simultaneously and eagerly inquired his anticipatory auditors.

'Lay—my—own—eggs,' deliberately and with emphasis replied Mr Chuckles, the benign smile on his face giving place to an expression of calm authority.

'Really, Christopher,' said Mrs Chuckles in a deprecatory tone, 'how can you talk such rubbish?' whilst Mary Ellen stared in a manner that suggested a lurking doubt in that young lady's mind as to her father's sanity.

'Maria, when I announce my determination to produce my own eggs, I, of course, speak allegorically, and intend to convey to your intelligent mind that I merely meant to adopt such measures as shall insure for our table a regular supply of fresh-laid hens—I mean eggs. In short, my intention is to keep poultry.'

'Indeed,' was the monosyllabic remark of Mrs Chuckles, and that in a tone sufficiently icy to have frozen the cream in the jug.

'O papa,' remonstrated Mary Ellen, 'what will become of my nice flower-beds?'

'I don't know, my dear,' replied her father with callous indifference; 'most probably they will remain where they are.'

'Have you calculated the cost, Christopher

dear, of each egg when laid by one's own fowls?' asked Mrs Chuckles.

'Ah,' returned the intending poultry-farmer, 'I was expecting that question; it is a regular stock one, always trotted out with the intention of crushing the party to whom it is propounded. But I am not going to be crushed by it. You must be aware, Maria, that I have many acquaintances in the grain-trade; therefore, I see no difficulty in being able to procure at the merest trifle of cost, if any at all, the quantity of corn they will be expected to consume. Samples, samples, Maria!' and the wily schemer indulged in a quiet little laugh, and rubbed his hands together with subdued ecstasy. 'And,' he continued, 'when the birds have ceased to furnish the breakfast-table with the nourishing egg, we can make them serve us yet another turn by introducing them into the interior of a pie-dish. Chicken-pie, eh, Maria?'

'Chicken-pie!' exclaimed Mary Ellen, in a tone of voice not altogether devoid of incredulity.

'Ostrich-pie,' suggested Mrs Chuckles, 'would perhaps be a more appropriate name for the dish you have in view.'

'Maria, Mary Ellen, despite your covert sneers,' exclaimed the irritated Chuckles, 'I am fully determined to become a proprietor of cochin-chinas!'

At this moment a diversion to the family controversy was caused by the loud ringing of the street-door bell.

'The postman,' confidently predicted Mary Ellen.

'Ah!' said her father, 'I very much suspect you are anticipating the arrival of a letter from that jackanapes Frank Featherwell. But let me tell you this, once and for all, that that individual will not suit *me* for a son-in-law.'

'O papa, everybody says that Frank—I mean Mr Featherwell, is—is a—a nice young man; and I—I——' 'Love him,' we suppose she was going to add, but the poor girl broke down, and sobs stopped her further speech.

'Dear, dear!' sympathisingly exclaimed Mrs Chuckles, 'see how you are distressing the poor child, Christopher; and I am sure you have no occasion to be so imbibed against Mr Featherwell, who, I am quite certain, is a most genteel person.'

'And pray, madam, how much per annum does he make by his gentility?' asked Mr Chuckles, as though he were propounding a conundrum which he well knew would be difficult to answer satisfactorily.

Before Mrs Chuckles could make a reply—that is, assuming she had one ready—Tiddewinks, the 'buttons' attached to the Chuckleses' household, entered the room with a letter which had just been delivered by the postman. It was for Mr Chuckles; and that worthy, after carelessly glancing at the superscription, laid it conveniently to hand on the table, and then commenced the perusal of his morning paper, which had hitherto remained untouched.

Whilst his master was thus preoccupied, the page, who had been standing all the time with his right hand behind his back, commenced to make rapid signs to the fair Mary Ellen in order to draw her attention; and that quick-witted young lady was by no means slow in guessing

that Tiddewinks was desirous of opening private communications with her. The youth, after having thus 'caught her eye,' brought, by a well-executed rapid flank movement, his dexter hand into close proximity to the plump little palm of his young mistress, who rapidly transferred the letter held by the strategical Tiddewinks, into her dress pocket, and by a nod, dismissed the buttoned Mercury.

'Now,' said Mr Chuckles, at length laying down his paper—'now for this letter.' He deliberately cut open the envelope, and then, running his eyes over the pages till he came to the signature, gave a low whistle, which of course at once aroused the curiosity of his wife and daughter.

'Who is it from, pa?' inquired Mary Ellen.

'From?' echoed Mr Chuckles. 'Why, it's from that—that impudent young Frank Featherwell. Just listen to what he says, or rather, writes. "MY DEAR MR CHUCKLES—Knowing how fond you are of new-laid eggs, and at the same time being fully alive to the difficulties which beset your path in procuring them in a fresh state, I have taken the liberty to send you a little present in the shape of a few choice specimens of cochin-china fowls, which will amply repay you for the food and attention bestowed upon them, by supplying you liberally with the requisite edible.—Trusting the hamper of birds will arrive all right and safe, I am, my dear sir, yours faithfully,

FRANK FEATHERWELL."

'I am sure it is very kind of the young man,' said Mrs Chuckles approvingly.

'And only to think, papa, he should have sent you the dear chickies just at the very moment you had made up your mind to have some! What a coincidence!'

'Well,' returned Mr Chuckles, 'I can't say that I am struck all of a heap at this display of generosity on the part of your admirer; I simply regard it as a mere attempt to gain my approbation to his paying his addresses to my only daughter, in order that he may receive her hand—ay, and her fortune.'

'I am quite certain, Christopher,' remarked Mrs Chuckles with some degree of warmth, 'that Mr Featherwell is not in any way influenced by considerations of a mercenary nature with regard to dear Mary Ellen. But there, you always were so suspicious of your fellow-creatures.'

'Suspicious, madam! Certainly, because I have found it pay the best in the long-run, never to credit any one with doing anything disinterestedly,' retorted Mr Chuckles oracularly. —'But here's a postscript to the letter. What is it?—"I must beg of you to be wary of the old one, because, though a splendid bird, he is somewhat given to pecking."—Oh, that's its little peculiarity, is it!' exclaimed Mr Chuckles, folding up his letter. 'I fancy I shall be careful of the ancient biped.'

'But, papa, perhaps the word "pecking" refers to its capacity for consuming barley,' suggested Mary Ellen.

'Nonsense, my dear,' replied her father. 'Depend upon it, the caution applies to the fowl's predilection for the calves of human legs.'

Here, Tiddewinks made his reappearance at

the door, his agitated countenance indicating the opposite of a calm state of mind.

'Now, what is the matter?' asked Mr Chuckles.

'Ple-e-se, sir, it ain't my fault, sir,' stammered the hapless youth.

'What is not your fault?'

'Why, sir, please, sir, the cove, the party as has brought the 'amper of chickens, sir, he's down-stairs, sir;' and, as though in corroboration of the page's assertion, the shrill crowing of a cockerel penetrated the breakfast parlour with ear-splitting distinctness.

'There he goes, sir,' remarked Tiddlewinks.

'Ah, the cochins—just so,' observed Mr Chuckles briskly.

'How my poor head will suffer in the morning!' said Mrs Chuckles ruefully.

'Take the hamper into the garden, Tiddlewinks,' directed Mr Chuckles.

'Yessir; but it ain't my fault that there's seven and sixpence to pay, sir; and the man won't leave the 'amper till he's got the money, sir. He's a-setting down on the basket, sir.'

'Seven and sixpence to pay for carriage!' indignantly exclaimed Mr Chuckles. 'I mean to say, when one party sends a present to another party, the cost of conveyance should be defrayed by the sender.—Tiddlewinks, proceed; I will follow, and endeavour to obtain a reduction on this demand.'

'Dear me,' said Mrs Chuckles to Mary Ellen, as the door closed upon her husband, 'how violent Christopher is. I am very much afraid he will never give his consent to your marriage with Mr Featherwell.'

'Then I will marry dear Frank *without* papa's consent,' retorted Mary Ellen spiritedly, 'perhaps sooner than you imagine, ma dear.'

'I really cannot say I am much pleased with Frank for sending those noisy fowls,' remarked Mrs Chuckles.

'Mamma, I feel quite certain that dear Frank had some special motive in view, when he sent them,' returned Mary Ellen significantly.

'Perhaps he had, my dear; but I think it would have been wiser on his part had he paid the carriage,' replied Mrs Chuckles, rising from her seat and going towards the door.

The moment her mother left the room, Mary Ellen impatiently drew her letter from her pocket, and tore open the envelope with nervous haste, and commenced rapidly to peruse the contents. 'Exactly as I thought!' she murmured, a mischievous look twinkling in her eyes. Thus ran the letter:

'MY OWN DEAREST!—This note will be only a short one, but, I trust, much to the purpose. I have sent your estimable, but, may I say, cantankerous papa a present of a few chickens. You will probably, darling, wonder why I have done so. Of course, I have told him that I send the chuckies in order that he may be well supplied with new-laid eggs. Well, I am afraid that is not eggs-actly the sole motive I have in view.—Now for the plot, the conspiracy, the blow-up! Do not scream, and oh, do not faint, or all will be lost! You and me, dearest, will, I hope—according to arrangements which are now completed—be married to-day, and by the aid of the chucky chuck! Now, follow my

instructions carefully, and all will go well. *Let the poultry escape from the hamper into the garden (near the wall). I shall be there at the right moment.*—Yours devotedly and conspiringly,

FRANK FEATHERWELL.

P.S.—The hamper was off before I remembered that I had omitted to pay the carriage. How very stupid of me!'

'Well, I never!' was the truly feminine exclamation which fell from Mary Ellen's pretty lips, as she came to the conclusion of the epistle. 'It is so like dear Frank to concoct some wild scheme or other, and although I half expected it, it does seem rather sudden.'

At this moment Mr Chuckles entered the room, and Mary Ellen hastily crushed back the letter into her pocket.

'Oh, you're here, are you?' commenced Mr Chuckles. 'Your Mr Frank Featherwell is a pretty specimen of his sex, I must say.'

'I am glad, papa, that you think he is nice-looking,' demurely replied Mary Ellen.

'Don't bandy words with me, miss,' fumed papa. 'I've had to pay the whole seven shillings and sixpence for carriage on these precious fowls!'

'Well, papa, I daresay the pretty little chicks are worth much more than that.'

'Pretty little chicks indeed!' echoed Mr Chuckles sarcastically. 'Why, the old bird who is given to pecking has already entered upon his profligate career by inflicting a severe wound in my trousers' leg; I should like to wring his ancient neck!'

'Where are the poor things now?' asked Mary Ellen.

'In the garden, to be sure,' growled the incipient chicken-farmer.

'Then,' said Mary Ellen to herself, 'I can carry out dear Frank's wish very nicely,' and she tripped in the most innocent manner through the glass doors and down the steps leading into the garden, as though the word conspiracy was utterly unknown in her vocabulary.

'That boy Tiddlewinks,' mused Mr Chuckles, 'is sharper than I gave him credit for being. It was very thoughtful of him to suggest that the lid of the hamper ought to be more securely fastened down; because, should the birds succeed in escaping from their confinement before I have got ready a suitable place for their permanent abode, awkward results might follow, especially if the cochins were to invade the well-kept garden of my next-door neighbour, the fiery Major Ironlungs. I think it would be wise on my part were I personally to superintend the tying-down operation.' And Mr Chuckles left the room with the intention of carrying out his idea.

When Mary Ellen reached the bottom of the garden, she was not long in discovering the whereabouts of the hamper of poultry. After carefully assuring herself that she was unobserved, the wicked young lady drew from her pocket a pair of bright, sharp-looking scissors, and deliberately commenced to cut through the cord which secured the lid of the basket. Just at the moment she was giving the finishing touch—or rather cut—to her mischievous work, she heard her name pronounced in a low but very distinct tone, and looking up on the instant, she encountered the gaze of her enamoured one, who

was looking at her over the wall which separated the garden from the back lane.

'O Frank!' exclaimed Mary Ellen, 'how you did startle me, to be sure!'

'Was it a frightened little birdie then?' said Frank, in mocking tones. 'But,' he continued more seriously, 'of course you got my letter all right? Come close up to the wall and "lend me thine ears," as the man says in the play.'

Mary Ellen dutifully obeyed her lover, but found the wall a trifle too high to enable her to easily carry out Frank's desire as regards her auricular organs without a good deal of standing on tiptoe and craning her neck upwards, which exercise caused her ruby lips to come so close to those belonging to the adored one at the other side of the prosaic bricks and mortar, that the result was a sound of an unmistakably osculatory character.

'Everything,' whispered Frank, 'is going on swimmingly, so, darling, you must meet me in an hour at the church door. I've got the ring, license, witnesses, old woman, pew-opener, little boys to cheer, and crowd to gaze upon and admire the lovely bride.'

'Do not be absurd, sir,' said Mary Ellen, blushing. 'But do you think it quite safe?' she continued hesitatingly.

'Safe? Safe as—houses, my precious, nervous little goose.' Again came the osculatory sound.

'Oh, dear Frank, how sudden and terrible it does seem!'

'Fearful, is it not?' observed the hardened wretch.

'But—but Frank, dear, you have not yet told me why I am to allow the chickens to escape from the hamper.'

'Simply a piece of strategy, worthy, I think, my dear, of the hero of Tel-el-Kebir. There is the hamper. When the lid has been unfastened, you will raise it, and then'—

'Well, what then, sir?'

'Why, then, if I am not very much mistaken, the sagacious cochins will at once avail themselves of the glorious opportunity presented to secure their freedom; and when their respected owner discovers them taking surveys of his land, he will use his best endeavours to lure back the exploring poultry into their deserted prison-house. Of course, the wise birds will respectfully but firmly decline the invitation, and then— Don't you see, my pet?'

'I think I do,' responded the pet, with a merry twinkle in her eyes.

'Of course!' ejaculated her lover. 'While the exciting chase is proceeding, and all is glorious confusion, a certain young lady I know will quietly put on her hat and cloak and speed with fairy footsteps to the beautiful ecclesiastical edifice round the corner. No one will miss her; the entire household will be engaged in the praiseworthy (but trying) attempt to induce erratic poultry to travel the way they do not wish. In the meantime, Miss Mary Ellen Chuckles has been transformed into Mrs Frank Featherwell. Only think, dearest!'

On hearing this, the expectant bride could do nothing more becoming than earnestly inspect the points of her tiny boots and blush bewitchingly.

'And now,' said Frank, consulting his watch, 'time flies; so must the chickens. You must do the deed.'

The deed was done; Frank disappeared, and Mary Ellen fled indoors to her own room.

INTERESTING DISCOVERY IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL.

A small portion of the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral, set apart by order of Queen Elizabeth, and fitted up as a church for the use of the French Protestants, has been held by them to this day. For the purpose of repair, it recently became necessary to remove a portion of the floor of this little church and make certain excavations. Very soon a large number of pieces of exquisitely carved and moulded stonework were brought to light, which once, without doubt, formed parts of an elaborately executed shrine. They are coloured blue, vermilion, and gold, and are finely wrought in the style of the middle of the fourteenth century. Many of the pieces are carved canopy-work, very delicately executed, clearly showing that there were many such niches surrounding what must have been a splendid work of art. A small piece of a sculptured robe was found belonging to an ecclesiastical figure life-size, and in this a single pearl remains imbedded as one of the ornaments of the robe, showing how rich and elaborate the monument must have been in the days of its glory. From a careful inspection of these fragments, it is believed they agree in character with the remains known as the shrine of St Dunstan, situated on the south side of the choir.

MY LOST LOVE.

WERE we but sure that he who won my Sweet
Would wear her nobly as the purest flower
That ever blossomed at his careless feet,
The idle fancy of an idler hour:
Had we assurance that the coming years
Would bring no clouding to the bridal sky,
That gentlest eyes would be undimmed by tears,
We would be satisfied, my heart and I.

Will he remember when the roses bloom,
That every morning found them at her door?
The Child perhaps would wonder were the room
Less bright with roses than it was before.
Will he be tender when the autumn leaves
Bring wistful memories that pass him by?
Sad memories for which my dear one grieves,
And only we shall know, my heart and I.

If the dear Christ, in tenderness divine,
And pity for this consecrated pain,
Would cause His sun all blessedly to shine
Upon her pathway—upon mine, the rain:
If by our sorrowing our love might take
Her faintest weariness or softest sigh,
And bear it thankfully for her sweet sake,
We would be well content, my heart and I.

M. E. W.

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